



US00686833B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Melen

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 6,868,333 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Mar. 15, 2005**

(54) **GROUP INTERACTION SYSTEM FOR
INTERACTION WITH OTHER VEHICLES
OF A GROUP**

(75) Inventor: **Roger D. Melen**, Los Altos Hills, CA
(US)

(73) Assignee: **Toyota InfoTechnology Center Co.,
Ltd.**, Tokyo (JP)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/346,503**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 15, 2003**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2004/0148090 A1 Jul. 29, 2004

(51) **Int. Cl.**⁷ **G01C 21/00**

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **701/200**

(58) **Field of Search** 701/200, 213,
701/214; 340/988

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

6,490,521 B2 * 12/2002 Wiener 701/211
6,549,768 B1 * 4/2003 Fraccaroli 455/456.3

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

JP 2000-357296 12/2000
JP 2002-277256 9/2002

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

"Trimble GPS Technology Enables Seiko Epson Commu-
nication Device and Wireless Data Service," Trimble News
Release [online], Nov. 8, 1999 [retrieved on Apr. 8, 2003].
Retrieved from the Internet: <URL: <http://www.trimble.com/news/110899a.htm>>.

Garmin® rino 110 2-way radio & personal navigator®—
Owner's Manual and Reference Guide; Sep. 2002.

International Search Report for International Application
No. PCT/JP2004/000250, dated Mar. 16, 2004.

* cited by examiner

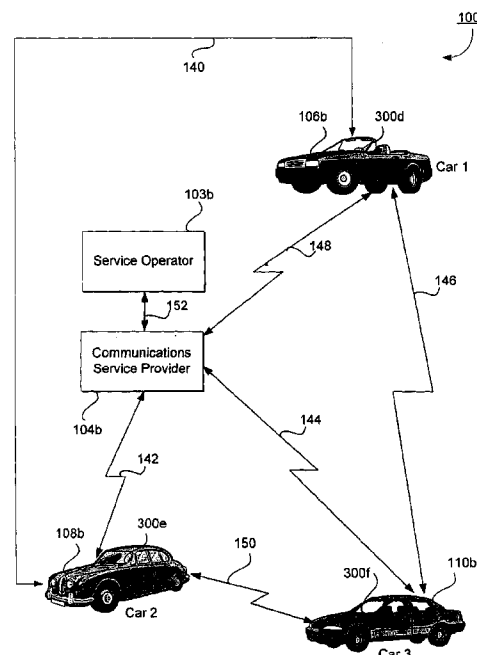
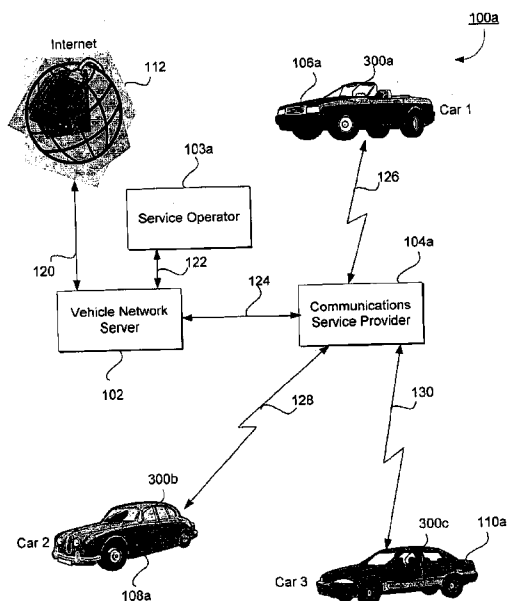
Primary Examiner—Yonel Beaulieu

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Fenwick & West LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The group interaction system comprises a plurality of
vehicle navigation systems that are capable of communicat-
ing with one another, displaying the location of other vehicle
navigation systems in a group, and receiving selection of
certain vehicle navigation systems in the group and selection
of an application for interaction among the selected vehicle
navigation systems. A group of vehicle navigation systems
to interact with is established. One or more of other vehicle
navigation systems to interact with the vehicle navigation
system. An application is also selected on the vehicle
navigation system for interaction with the selected other
vehicle navigation systems. In response, the vehicle navi-
gation system runs the selected application with respect to
the selected other navigation systems.

15 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



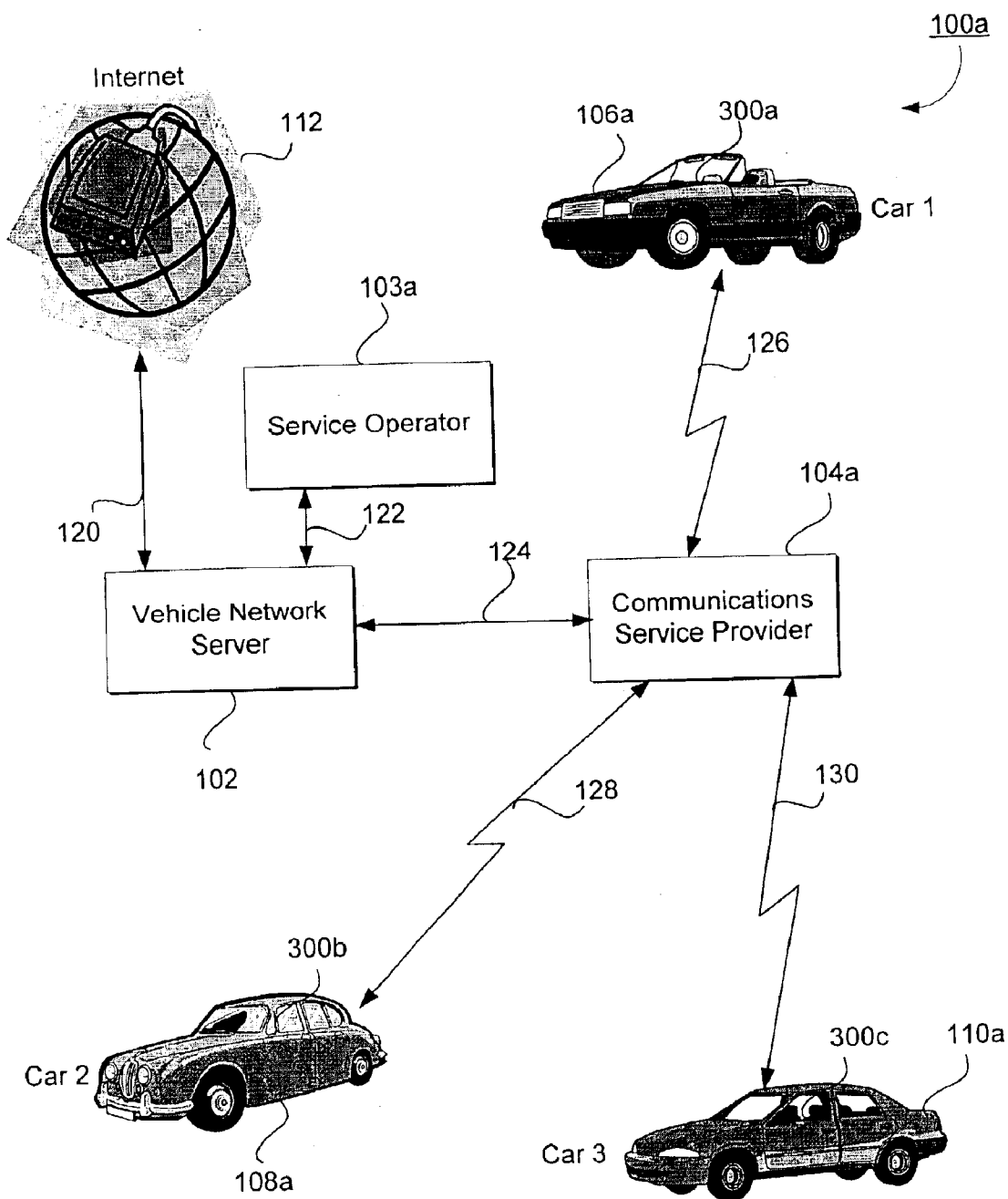


FIG. 1A

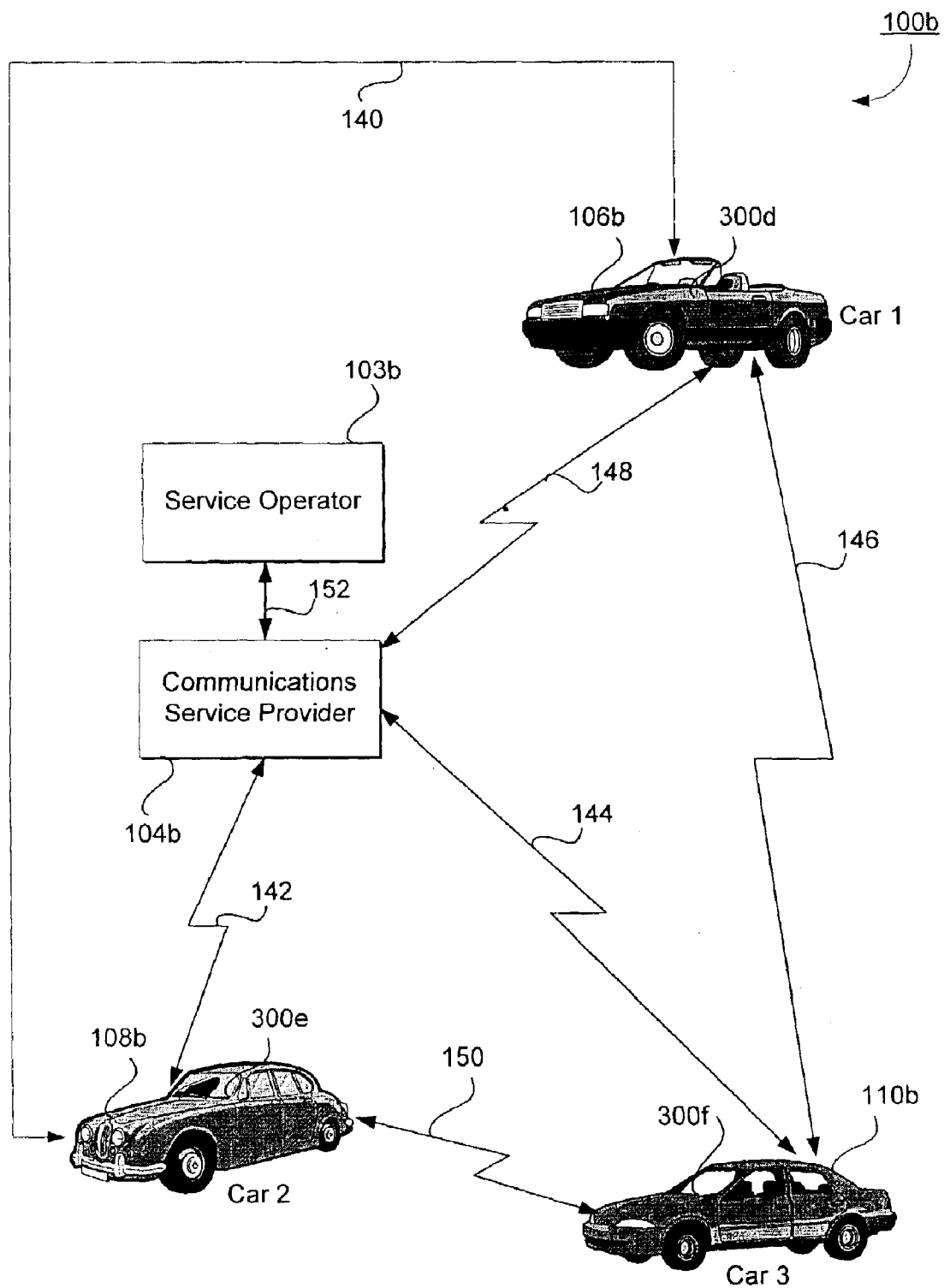
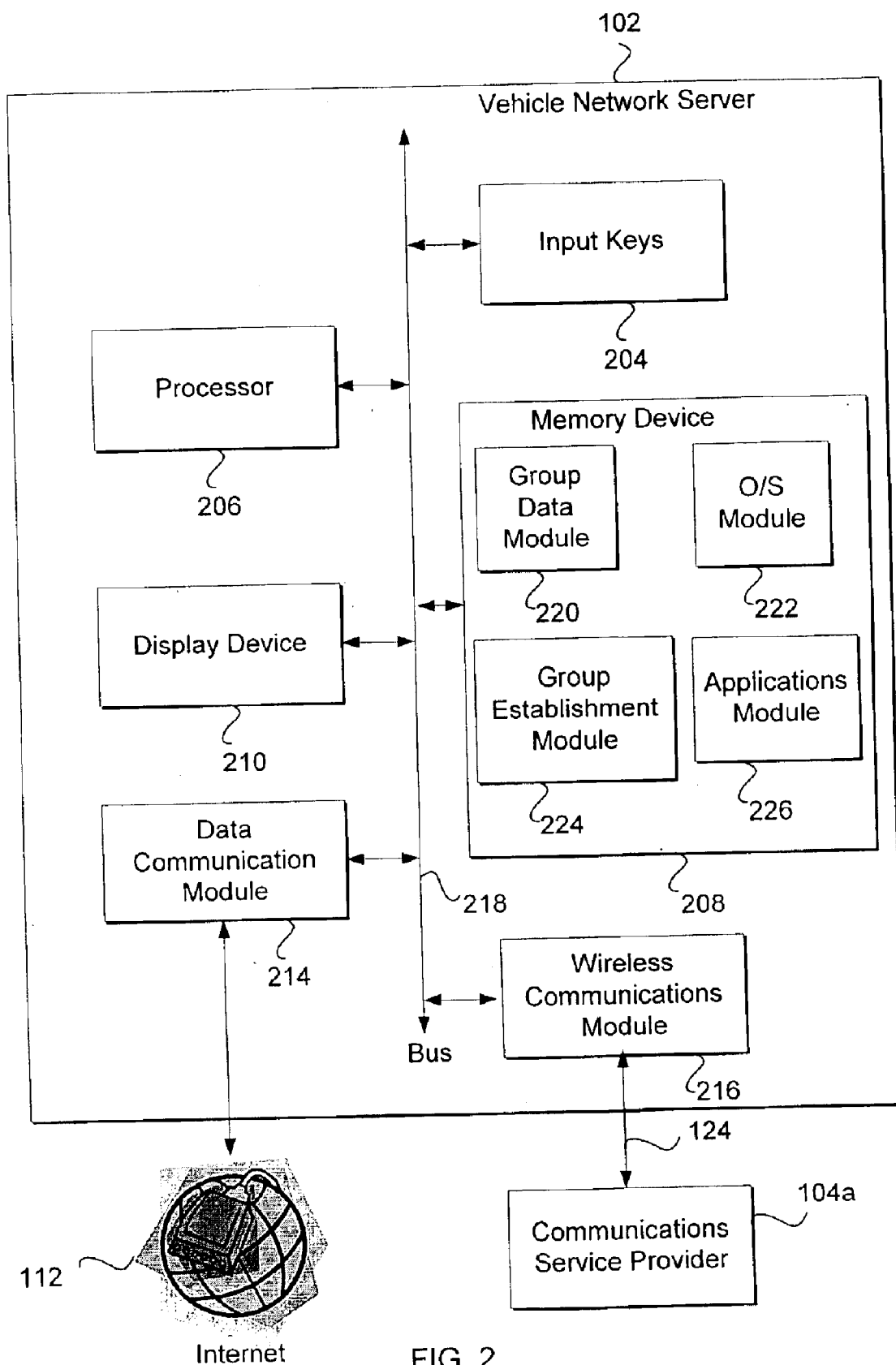


FIG. 1B



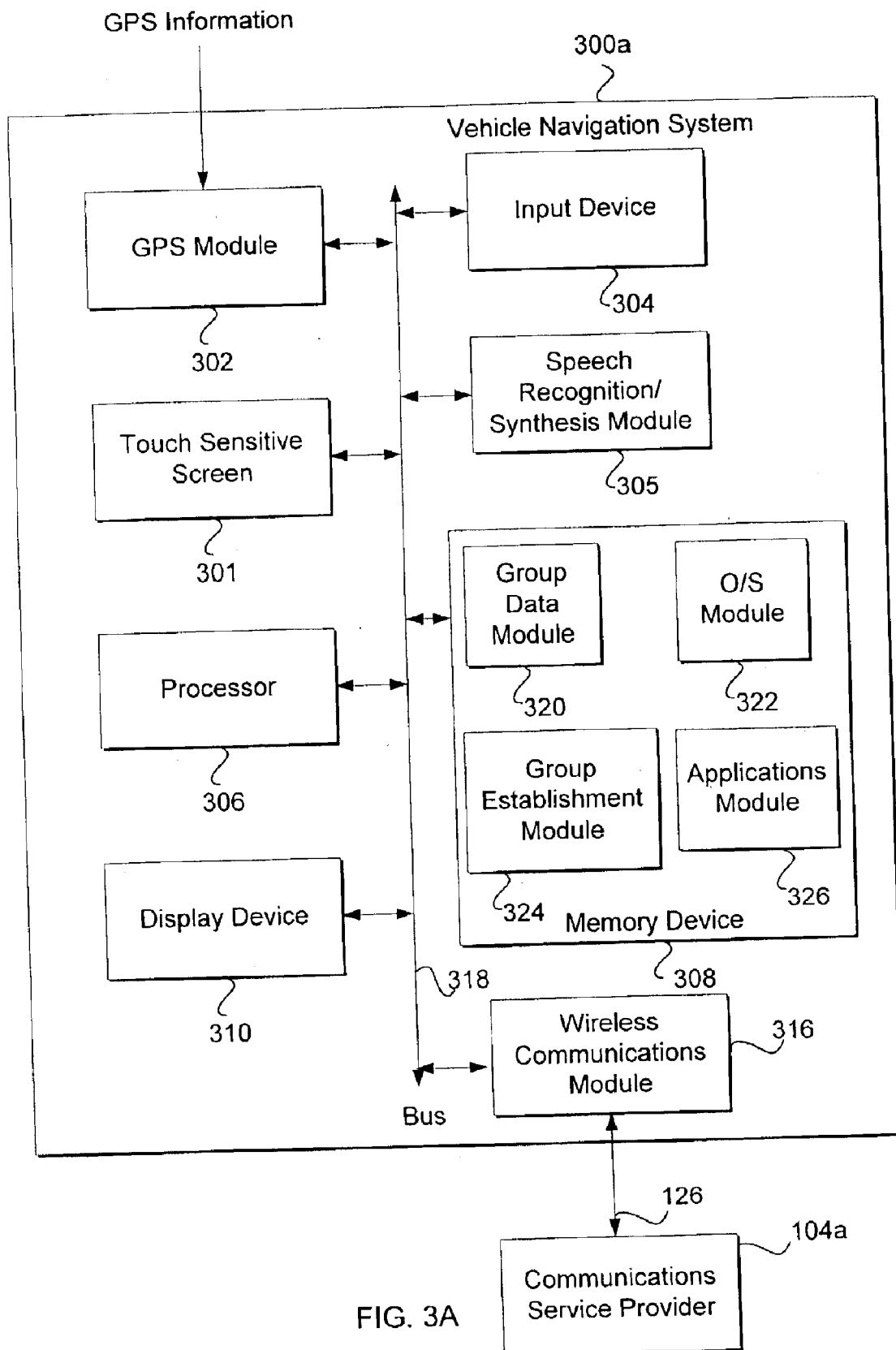
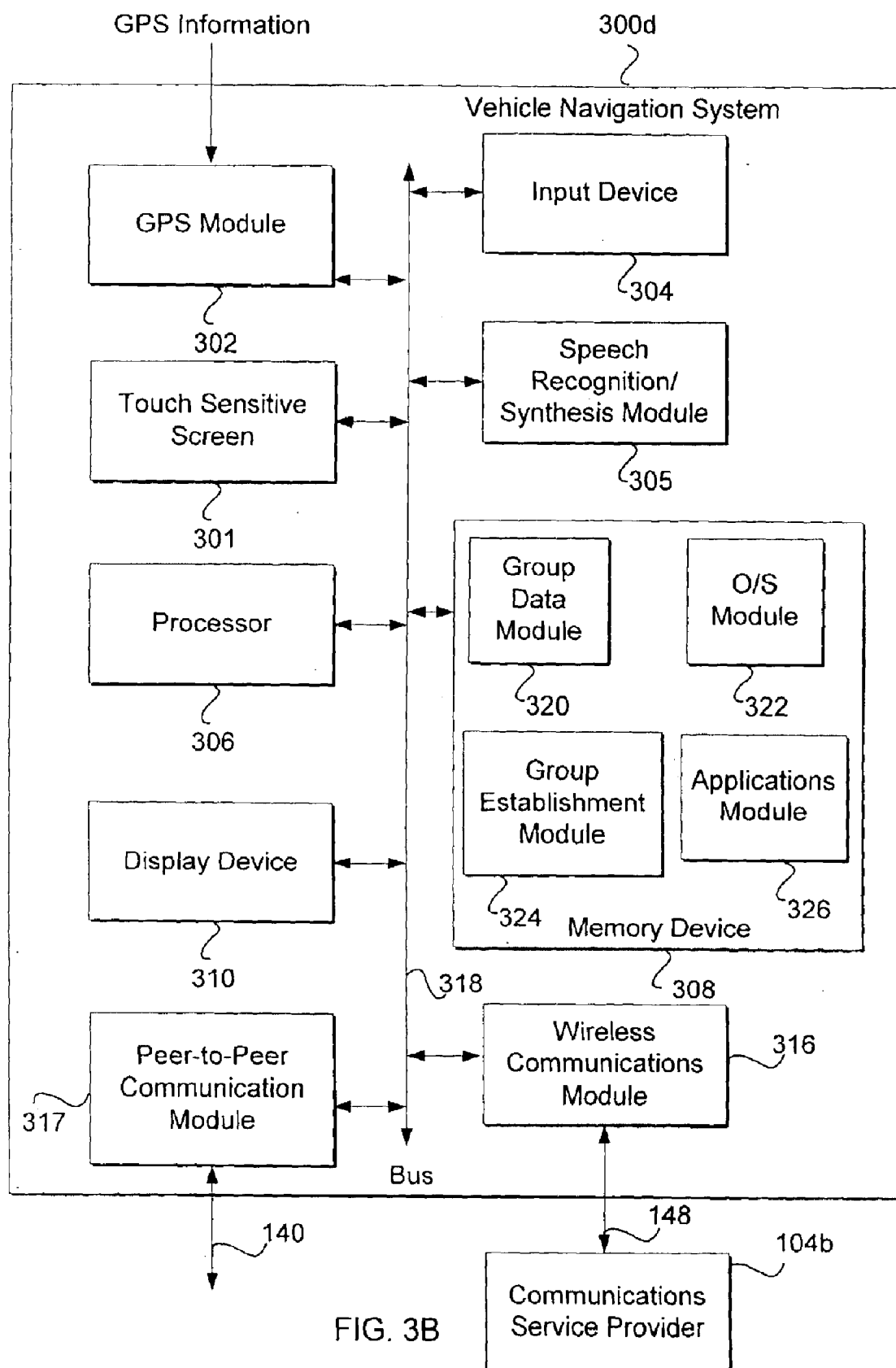


FIG. 3A



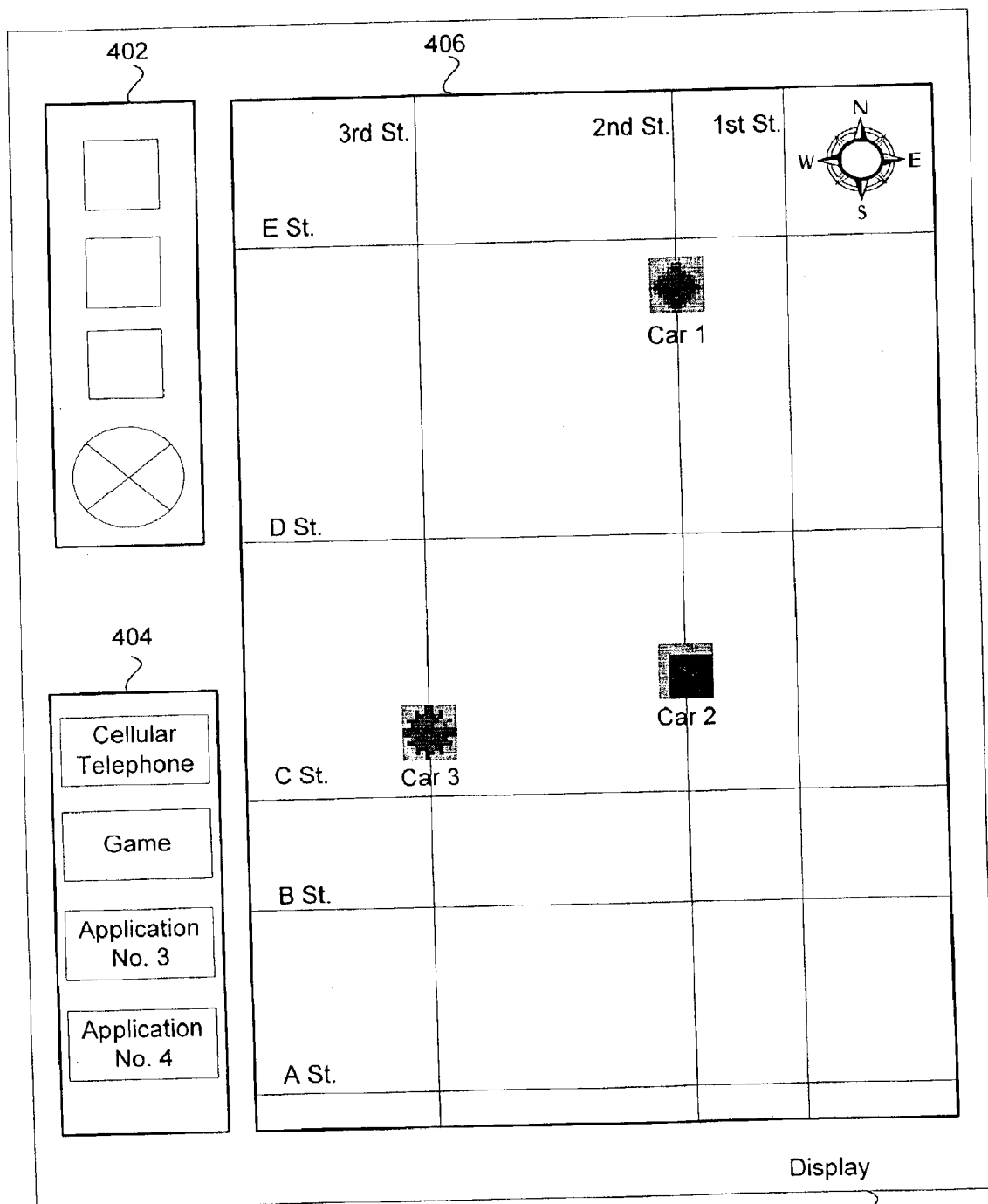


FIG. 4

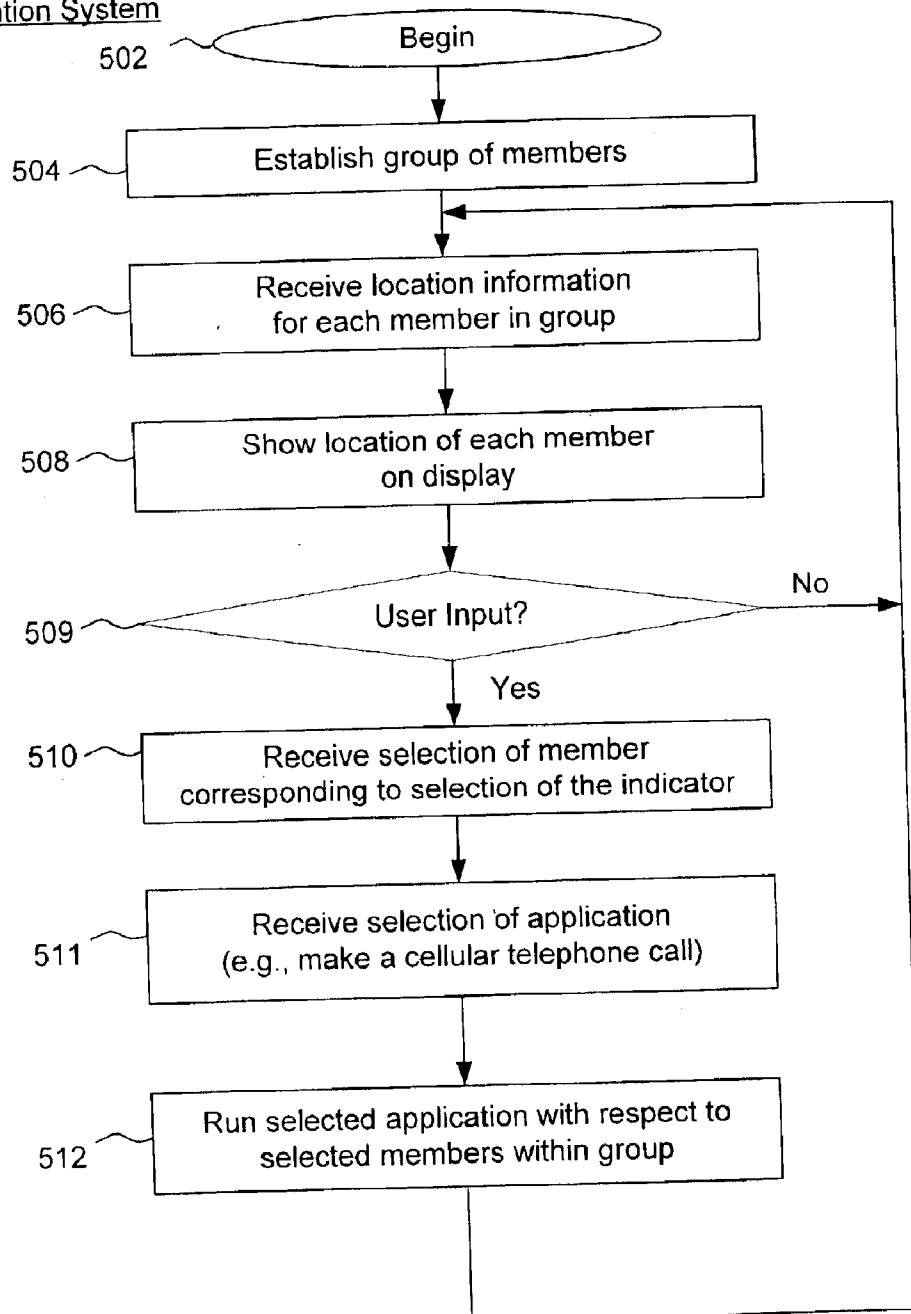
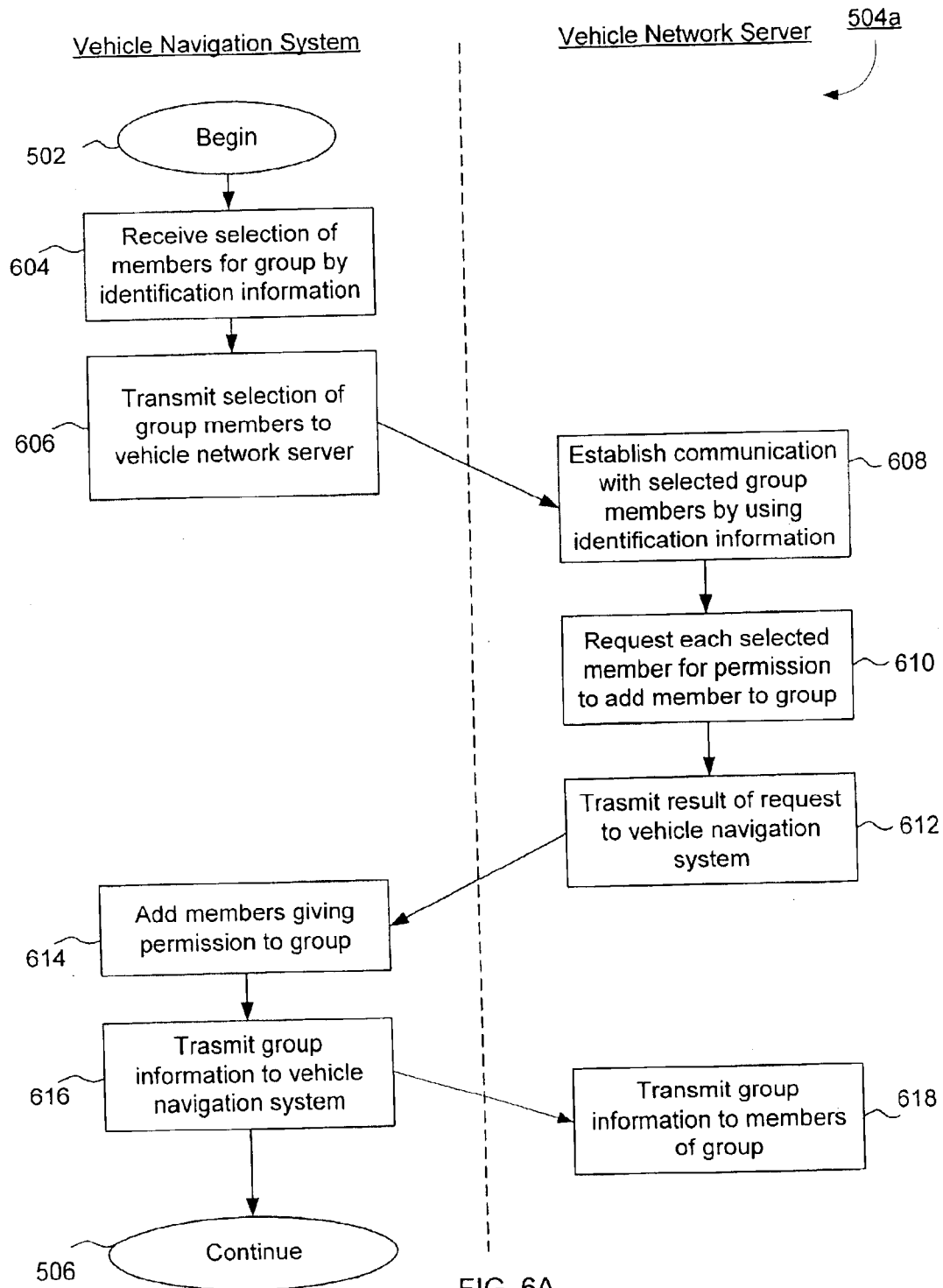
Vehicle Navigation System

FIG. 5



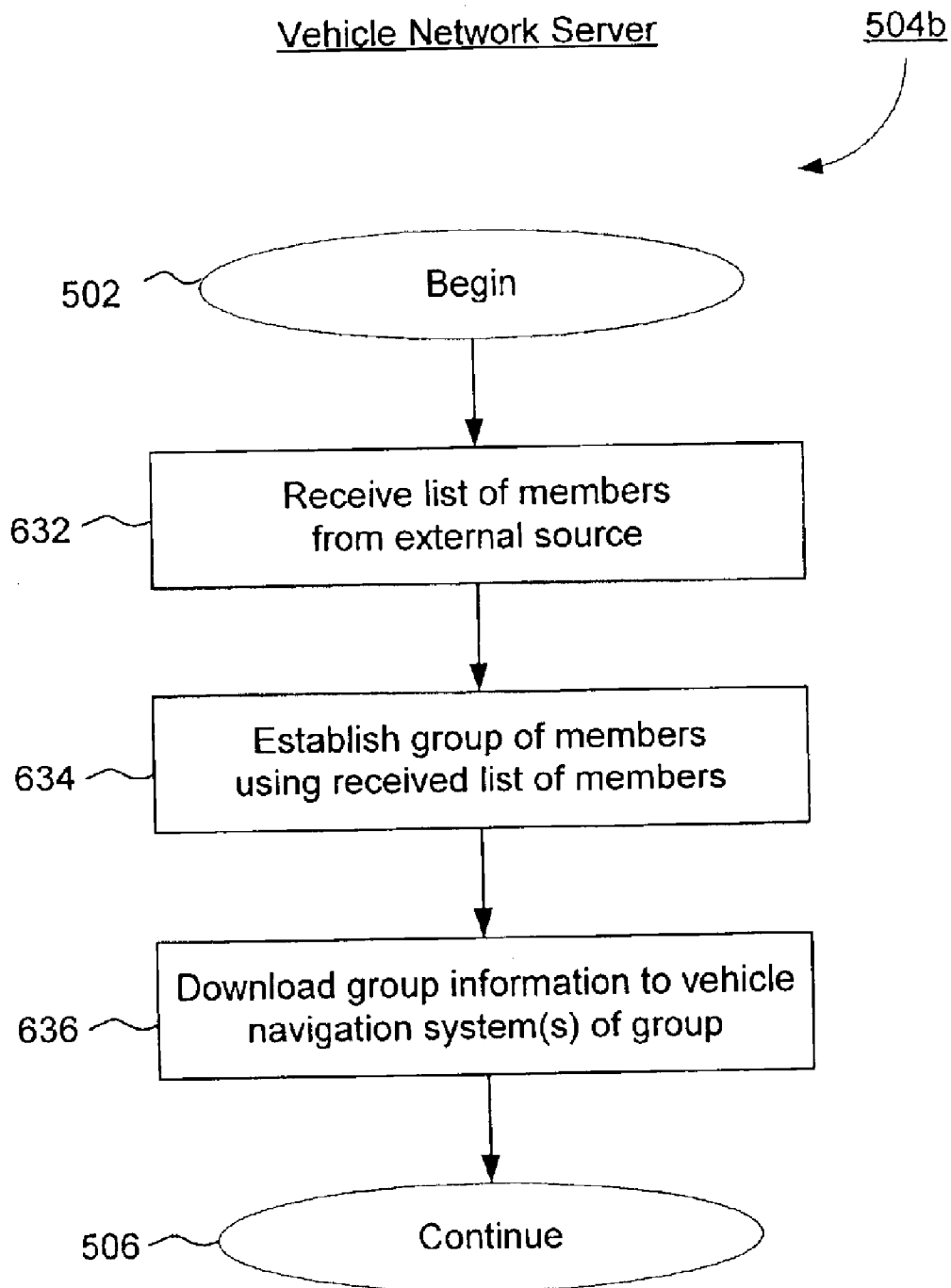


FIG. 6B

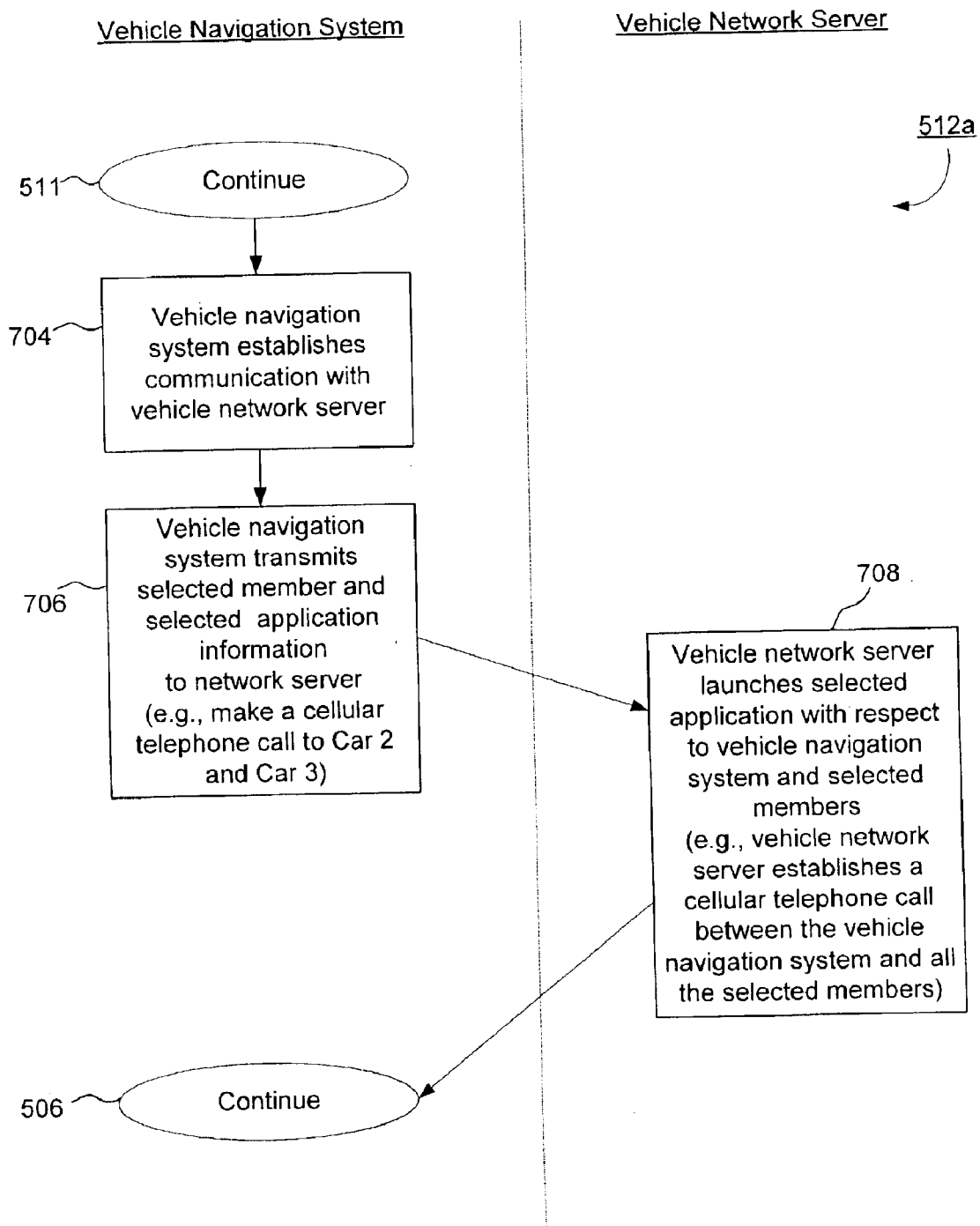


FIG. 7A

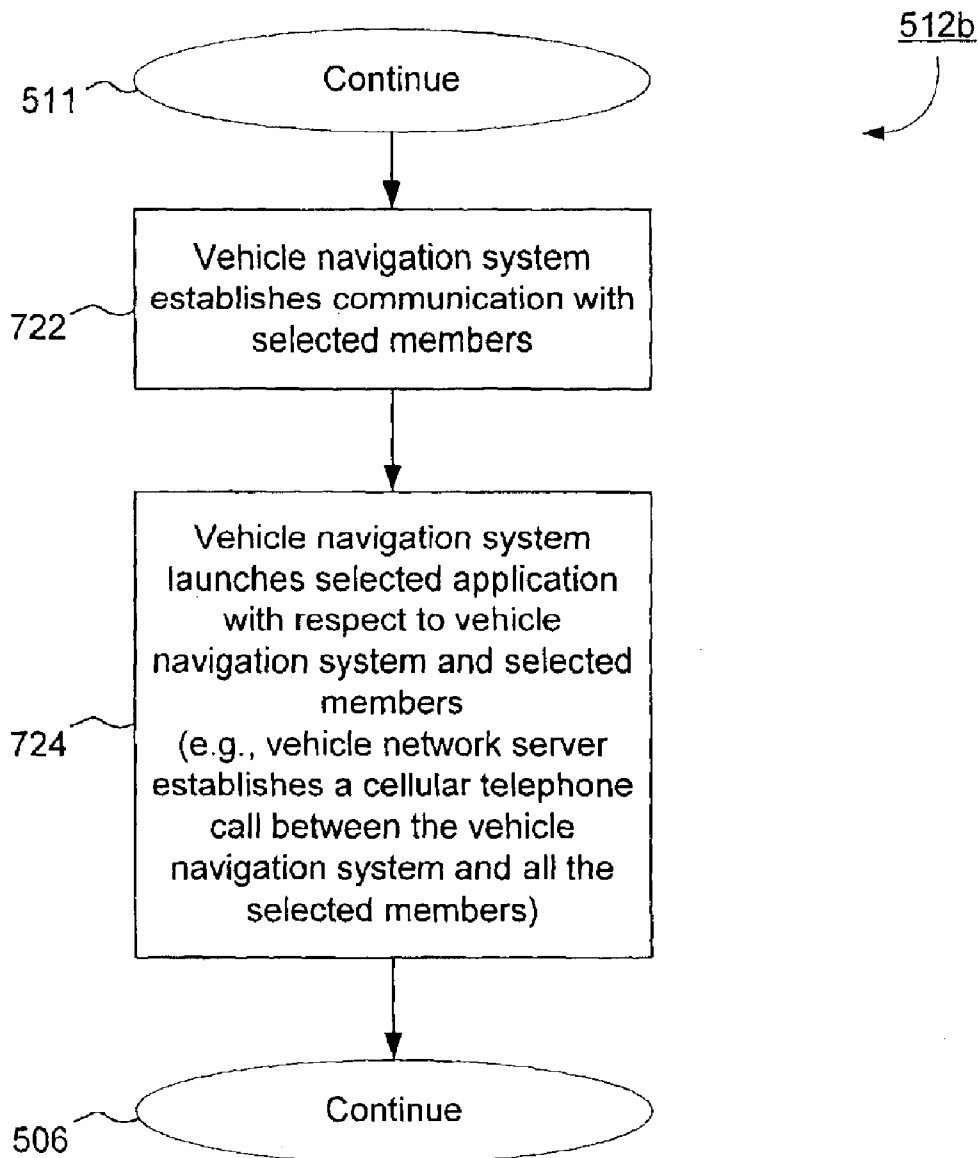
Vehicle Navigation System

FIG. 7B

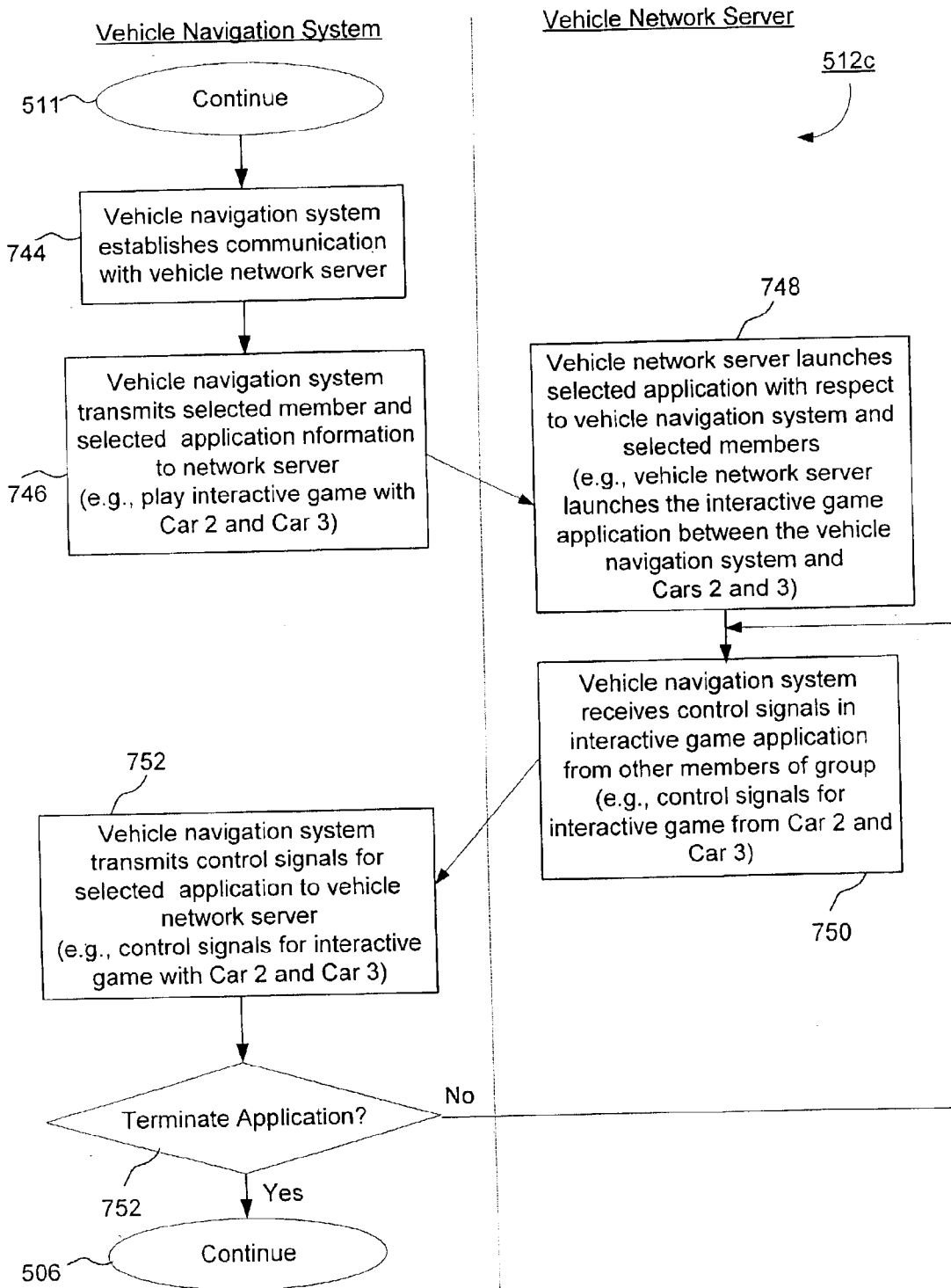


FIG. 7C

1

GROUP INTERACTION SYSTEM FOR INTERACTION WITH OTHER VEHICLES OF A GROUP

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to group interaction systems enabling interaction with people in other vehicles, and more specifically, to a group interaction system in a networked vehicle environment in which a user may interact with people in other vehicles of an enabled group by using their networked vehicle navigation systems.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Recently, vehicles have been equipped with navigation systems using global positioning systems (GPS). Conventional navigation systems using GPS pinpoint the current location of a vehicle by triangulation of GPS signals received from three satellites. Such conventional navigation systems typically read digital maps from a CD-ROM, DVD-ROM, or hard disk storing such digital maps, and are capable of indicating the current location of the vehicle on the digital map and guiding the user to a particular destination. However, conventional navigation systems are incapable of tracking the current location of vehicles other than the vehicle in which the navigation system resides.

Vehicles are also equipped with wireless communication systems such as cellular telephones or satellite telephones. Vehicle users may communicate with people in other vehicles by using such wireless communication systems. However, conventional wireless communication systems are incapable of providing a convenient way of communicating or interacting with a specific group of people or selected members of the group. In order to communicate with selected members of the group, the user of conventional wireless communication systems needs to place a call manually to the selected members of the group, while the user is driving on the road. Such primitive way of communicating or interacting with other members of the group is inconvenient and interruptive.

Conventional vehicle navigation systems cannot track the current location of other vehicles besides the vehicle in which the navigation system resides either, since they are not capable of communicating with other navigation systems residing in other vehicles. For example, a group of people may drive in separate vehicles to a common destination. In such situation, members of the group would like to track the current location of other members in each of the vehicles in the group so that they can stay together and do not get separated too far apart. Members of the group may also want to be able to communicate with other members in the group while they are driving to the destination in a convenient manner. However, conventional navigation systems fail to provide a way of tracking the location of other vehicles and interacting with them.

Some conventional two-way radio systems ("walkie-talkie") are equipped with GPS functionality and have the ability to send its position to the other walkie-talkie using radio signals, so that one user of the walkie-talkie may determine the position of another walkie-talkie. Here, the GPS information of one user of the walkie-talkie is transmitted to the other walkie-talkie by radio frequency communication. However, these two-way radio systems fail to provide maintain a group of members, and location of the members may not be tracked in real-time because the GPS information is only manually transmitted and not updated

2

continuously. Furthermore, anyone with such walkie-talkie may intercept the position information, so these walkie-talkies fail to provide privacy within a group.

Therefore, there is a need for a group interaction system in which members of the group may track each other's locations, and communicate or interact with each other in real time and in a convenient and non-interruptive manner. There is also a need for a method of establishing the group of members to be used with the group interaction system in a convenient and efficient manner.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

The group interaction system of the present invention comprises a plurality of vehicle navigation systems that are capable of communicating with one another in a group, tracking and displaying the location of each other and sharing an application for interaction among selected vehicle navigation systems. The user of the vehicle navigation system defines the group of vehicle navigation systems with which to interact using identification information corresponding to the vehicle navigation systems. The user selects one or more of the other vehicle navigation systems from the group and a software application for interaction with the selected vehicle navigation systems. In response, the vehicle navigation system of the present invention runs the selected application with respect to the selected vehicle navigation systems. The application may include a cellular telephone application.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the vehicle navigation system comprises a global positioning system (GPS) module receiving a GPS signal for determining the location of the vehicle navigation system, a wireless communications module for communicating with other vehicle navigation systems of a group and receiving location information of the other vehicle navigation systems in the group, a display device for displaying the location of the vehicle navigation systems in the group on a map and a list of one or more applications, and an input device such as a touch sensitive screen coupled to the display device for receiving input commands corresponding to selection of one or more of the other vehicle navigation systems in the group shown one on the map and a selection of an application. A processor coupled to the touch sensitive screen runs the selected application with respect to the other vehicle navigation systems in the selected second vehicles.

The group interaction system also includes a vehicle network server facilitating the interaction among the vehicle navigation systems of a group. The vehicle network server comprises a wireless communications module for communicating with the vehicle navigation systems of the group. The wireless communications module receives from a vehicle navigation system a selection of one or more vehicle navigation systems with which to interact and a selection of an application for interaction among the selected vehicle navigation systems in the group. The vehicle network server also comprises a processor coupled to the wireless communications module for running the selected application with respect to the selected vehicle navigation systems.

The vehicle navigation system of the present invention enables its user to establish a group with which to interact while simultaneously tracking the location of the vehicle navigation systems in the group. The vehicle navigation system also provides a simple and convenient way of selecting certain members (or vehicle navigation systems) in the group for interaction. An application for interaction with the selected members may also be conveniently selected.

The vehicle navigation system of the present invention is capable of running the selected application with respect to the selected members (or vehicle navigation systems).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The teachings of the present invention can be readily understood by considering the following detailed description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1A is a diagram illustrating a group interaction system according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 1B is a diagram illustrating a group interaction system according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle network server according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3A is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle navigation system according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3B is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle navigation system according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a graphical representation of the screen of the display device on a vehicle navigation system according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart illustrating a method of interacting with members within an enabled group using the vehicle navigation system according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6A is a flowchart illustrating a method of establishing a group of members according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6B is a flowchart illustrating a method of establishing a group of members according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7A is a flowchart illustrating a method of running the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system and the selected members according to one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7B is a flowchart illustrating a method of running the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system and the selected members according to another embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7C is a flowchart illustrating a method of running the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system and the selected members according to still another embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

The embodiments of the present invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings. Like reference numerals are used for like elements in the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1A is a diagram illustrating a networked group interaction system **100a** according to a first embodiment of the present invention. The networked group interaction system **100a** includes a plurality of vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, a communications service provider **104**, a vehicle network server **102**, and a service operator **103a**. The vehicle network server **102** is also shown connected to the Internet **112**. The vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a** include vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**, respectively, for use in the networked group interaction system **100a** of the present

invention. Although the group interaction system **100a** is shown with three vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, it should be clear to one skilled in the art that any plurality of vehicles and corresponding vehicle navigation systems may be used consistent with the present invention.

The navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** are capable of performing the functions of conventional navigation systems and are also configured to establish a group of members associated with other navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** and communicate/interact with other navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in the group in accordance with the embodiment. That is, the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** are capable of displaying the corresponding vehicle's location by using conventional Global Position Systems (GPS) (not shown) installed therein. In addition, the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in the vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, respectively, are capable of wireless communication **126**, **128**, **130**, preferably cellular communication, through the communications service provider **104**. The communication service provider **104** communicates with the vehicle network server **102a** via a wired communication (e.g., a telephone line) **124**, although wireless communication may also be used. The communications service provider **104** may be any conventional cellular telephone service provider.

Referring to FIG. 1A, the group interaction system **100a** enables communication and interaction with members of an enabled group according to the methods described in FIGS. 5, 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B using the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. The vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in the vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, respectively, are capable of wireless communication or interaction with one another. In the group interaction system **100a** of FIG. 1, wireless communication or interaction among selected members of the enabled group (selected users of the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**) is accomplished via the communication service provider **104a** and the vehicle network server **102**. The group interaction system **100a** is a star topology with the vehicle network server **102** being at the center of the star, such that all communication or interaction among the selected members is accomplished through the vehicle network server **102**. For example, the navigation system **300a** in vehicle **106a** may transmit control signals to the vehicle network server **102a** via the communications service provider **104a** in order to establish wireless communication or other types of interaction with the navigation system **300b** in vehicle **108a**. In response, the vehicle network server **102a** establishes wireless communication or interaction between the navigation system **300a** in vehicle **106a** and the navigation system **300b** in the vehicle **108a** of the enabled group. As stated above, the wireless communication between the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** is preferably a cellular telephone communication, although it should be clear to one skilled in the art that other types of wireless communication such as satellite communication, short-range radio communication, or IEEE 802.11(b) standard communication may be used in accordance with the present invention.

The navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** may also transmit or receive GPS information of the corresponding vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, to other navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** within the group using wireless communication through the vehicle network server **102**. For example, navigation system **300a** may receive the GPS information of vehicles **108a**, **110a**, from the navigation systems **300b**, **300c**, respectively, through the vehicle network server **102** and the communications service provider **104a**. The GPS information of the other vehicles **108a**, **110a**

5

may be displayed on a display of the navigation system **300a** along with the GPS information of its own vehicle **106a**.

The vehicle navigation systems **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, are capable of transmitting and receiving GPS information and control signals selecting groups and applications along with the data (e.g., voice data and control signals for cellular telephone calls) required for running applications among selected members simultaneously to and from the vehicle network server **102**. The data required for running applications are transmitted and received via conventional cellular telephone communication (such as GSM) while the GPS information and control signals for selecting groups and applications are transmitted and received using text messaging (short messaging service) in cellular telephone communication.

An optional service operator **103a** coupled to the vehicle network server **102** may also provide various services to the members in the group, such as providing live operator service, voice mail service, and the like. The service operator **103a** may also be capable of establishing wireless communication among the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** manually, in case the vehicle network server **102** becomes incapable of automatically establishing such wireless communication. The communication between the server operator **103a** and the vehicle network server **102** is preferably carried out by wired communication **122**.

The group interaction system **100a** establishes the group of members for wireless communication or other types of interaction using various methods such as those described in FIGS. 6A and 6B. For example, the group may be established in the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** by manual input by its users. The group may also be input and stored on a web server (not shown) on the Internet **112** and downloaded from the web site to the vehicle network server **102** via wired data communication **120**. The vehicle network server **102** in turn provides the group information to the respective navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the communications service provider **104a**. It should be clear to one skilled in the art that various methods of establishing an interactive group for the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** may be used consistent with the present invention.

The group information for the group interaction system **100a** contains various information regarding the members in the group, such as the identification of each vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300b**, **300c** and the vehicle identification numbers of the corresponding vehicles **106**, **108**, **110** by their user names or any other type of identification, and a cellular telephone number corresponding to each of the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. The group information may also contain other information, such as the applications available on the respective navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** for interaction with other members of the group.

The group interaction system **100** according to the first embodiment of the present invention may be used to establish a group of members for interaction, track the location of the members in real-time, and to communicate or interact with selected members of the group by wireless communication. For example, the user of the navigation system **300a** in vehicle **106** may establish a group including the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a**, respectively. Each navigation system **300a**, **300b**, **300c** keeps track of the location of all the vehicles in the group in real time using its own GPS information and the GPS information received from other vehicles **106a**, **108a**, **110a** via the vehicle network server **102**. Each member in the

6

group may select some of the members in the group using the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** and communicate or interact with the selected members via wireless communication. The manner in which members in the group are selected using the navigation systems and wireless communication or interaction among the selected members is accomplished will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. 2-5, 6A-6B, and 7A-7B.

FIG. 1B is a diagram illustrating a networked group interaction system **100b** according to a second embodiment of the present invention. In contrast to the group interaction system **100a** shown in FIG. 1A that uses a vehicle network server **102**, the group interaction system **100b** in FIG. 1B is modified to be a peer-to-peer system enabling wireless communication without the use of a vehicle network server **102**.

The networked group interaction system **100b** includes a plurality of vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b**, a communications service provider **104b**, and an optional service operator **103b**. The vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b** include vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f**, respectively, for use in the networked group interaction system **100b** of the present invention. Although the group interaction system **100b** is shown with three vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b** and three corresponding vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f**, it should be clear to one skilled in the art that any number of vehicles and corresponding vehicle navigation systems may be used consistent with the present invention.

The navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** are different from the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in FIG. 1A, in that they are capable of establishing groups of members and communicating wirelessly with other navigation systems without the use of a vehicle network server. That is, the navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** are capable peer-to-peer wireless communication **140**, **146**, **150** among selected members within the group without the use of a vehicle network server. The details of the operations of the vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** will be explained below with reference to FIG. 3B. The wireless communication is preferably cellular communication, although any other type of wireless communication may be used. The navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** are also capable of displaying the corresponding vehicle's location using conventional Global Position Systems (GPS) (not shown) installed therein.

Referring to FIG. 1B, the group interaction system **100b** enables communication and interaction with members of a group according to the methods described in FIGS. 5, 6A, 6B, 7A, and 7B by using the navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f**. The vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** in the vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b**, respectively, are capable of wireless communication or interaction with one another. In the group interaction system **100b** of FIG. 1B, wireless communication or interaction among selected members of the enabled group (selected users of the vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f**) is accomplished without the use of a vehicle network server. For example, the navigation system **300d** in vehicle **106b** may establish wireless communication or other types of interaction with the navigation system **300e** in vehicle **108b** directly via short-range radio communication **140** or indirectly via the communications service provider **104b**, without the use of a vehicle network server. The wireless communication **140**, **146**, **150** between the navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** themselves is preferably short range radio communication or IEEE 802.11b communication, but it should be clear to one skilled in the art that other types of wireless communication such as

cellular communication or satellite communication may be used in accordance with the present invention.

The navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** may also transmit or receive GPS information of the corresponding vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b**, respectively, to other navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** within the group using wireless communication directly **140**, **146**, **150** or indirectly via the communications service provider **104b**, but without the use of a vehicle network server. For example, navigation system **300d** may receive the GPS information of vehicles **108b**, **110b**, from the vehicle navigation systems **300e**, **300f**, respectively. The GPS information is transmitted directly by using short-range radio communication **140**, **146**, **150**. The GPS information of the other vehicles **108b**, **110b** may be displayed on a display of the vehicle navigation system **300d** along with the GPS information of its own vehicle **106b**. Other control signals such as selection of group members and applications are also transmitted directly **140**, **146**, **150** by using short range radio communication.

On the other hand, data required for interaction among selected members of the group such as voice data in cellular telephone calls among the vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** is transmitted and received among the vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** via separate communication channels **142**, **144**, **148** though the communications service provider **104b**. The communication channels **142**, **144**, **148** are preferably cellular communication channels.

An optional service operator **103b** may also be coupled to the communication service provider **104b** via wired communication **152** and provide various services to the members in the group, such as live operator service, voice mail service, and the like.

The group interaction system **100b** establishes the enabled group for wireless communication or other types of interaction using various methods such as those described in FIGS. 6A and 6B. For example, the group may be established in the navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** by manual input by its users. It should be clear to one skilled in the art that various methods of establishing an interactive group for the navigation systems may be used consistent with the present invention.

The group information for the group interaction system **100b** contains various information regarding a plurality of members in the group, such as the identification of each vehicle navigation system **300d**, **300e**, **300f** by their user names or any other type of identification, the vehicle identification numbers of the corresponding vehicles **106b**, **108b**, **110b**, and cellular telephone numbers corresponding to the navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f**. The group information may also contain other information, such as information regarding the applications available on the respective navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** for interaction with other members of the group.

Similar to the group interaction system **100a** in FIG. 1A, the group interaction system **100b** according to the second embodiment of the present invention may be used to establish a group of members for interaction, track the location of the members, and to communicate or interact with selected members of the group by wireless communication. However, the group interaction system **100b** of FIG. 1B is different from the group interaction system **100a** of FIG. 1A, in that it is capable of peer-to-peer communication among the members without the use of a vehicle network server **102**. Here, the vehicle navigation system **300d**, **300e**, **300f** initiating the group interaction process will establish the group and share the group information with other members

of the group by transmitting such group information to the other vehicle navigation systems **300d**, **300e**, **300f** via direct wireless communication **140**, **146**, **150**. The manner in which members in the group are selected using the navigation systems and wireless communication or interaction among the selected members is accomplished will be described in detail below with reference to FIGS. 2-5, 6A-6B, and 7A-7B.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle network server **102** according to one embodiment of the present invention. The vehicle network server **102** is used with the group interaction system **100a** shown in FIG. 1A in order to provide interaction among members of a group of vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**.

Referring to FIG. 2, the vehicle network server **102** includes an input device **204**, a processor **206**, a memory device **208**, a display device **210**, a data communication module **214**, and a wireless communications module **216**. The wireless communications module **216** is preferably a cellular telephone interface, although other types of wireless communication such as satellite communication, short-range radio communication, or communication according to the IEEE 802.11b standard, may be used. The wireless communications module **216** is capable of communicating with the various navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** of FIG. 1 via the communications service provider **104a**. The wireless communication **124** between the vehicle network server **102** and the communications service provider **104a** is preferably cellular telephone communication. The wireless communications module **216** receives various control information from the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**, such as information regarding selection of a group, selection of members in the group, various information regarding the members of the group (e.g., identification of the members, cellular telephone numbers, etc.), selection of an application to launch among selected members, GPS information of the member vehicle navigation systems, etc. via the communication service provider **104a**. Such control information is transmitted via text messaging of the cellular communication **124** between the communications service provider **104a** and the vehicle network server **102**. Such control information received by the wireless communications module **216** is stored in the memory device **208** for use by the vehicle network server **102** according to the present invention. The wireless communications module **216** also transmits and receives interactive application data, such as actual voice data and associated control signals for cellular telephone calls, to and from the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the communications service provider **104a** using cellular communication **124**.

The data communication module **214** is a conventional interface that enables connection to a data communication networks such as the Internet. The data communication module **214** may be a standard Ethernet interface or the like. The data communication module **214** receives various information from the Internet **112**. For example, users of the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** may establish a group for, interaction on a web server using a web page on the Internet **112**, with all the information (e.g., identification of members, cellular telephone numbers of members, etc.) used for establishing the group and communicating or interacting with members in the group. Such group information may also be used as the default group information in case no group information is input to the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. The vehicle network server **102** may also operate as the web server on the Internet **112**. The group information stored on the web server on the Internet **112** may

be downloaded to the vehicle network server **102** via the data communication module **214** and eventually transmitted to the navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the wireless communications module **216** and the communications service provider **104a**. Each vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300b**, **300c** stores the group information in the memory device **208**.

The processor **206** controls the operation of the various components in the vehicle network server **102**, including the input device **204**, the memory device **208**, the display device **210**, the data communications module **214**, the wireless communications module **216**, via the bus **218**. To this end, the processor **206** executes instructions or programs stored in the memory device **208** to provide various functionalities of the vehicle network server **102**, such as establishing a group, establishing communication among selected members of the group, running an application associated with selected members of the group, and the like.

The memory device **208** operates as a working memory for the processor **206** and also stores various information used by the vehicle network server **102** and/or the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. The memory device **208** includes a group data module **220**, an O/S (operating system) module **222**, a group establishment module **224**, and an applications module **226**. The O/S module **222** stores the operating systems or boot-up sequences for the vehicle network server **102**. The group data module **220** stores all the group information such as group member list, identification of the group members, and the like. The group establishment module **224** stores instructions and programs for establishing a group of members according to the methods described in FIGS. 6A and 6B. The applications module **226** stores various applications for interaction with selected members of the group, such as a cellular telephone application, game application, and the like. The memory device **208** is preferably a rewritable memory such as an SRAM, flash memory, or hard disk.

In a more distributed system according to another embodiment of the present invention, the memory device **208** may store less information, such that the group information, the applications, and/or the information for establishing a group are stored in the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** themselves rather than the in the vehicle network server **102**.

The display device **210** displays information used for interaction with live operators when the live operators are directly using the vehicle network server **102** to service the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. In such case, the input device **204** is used by the live operators to input data and commands to the vehicle network server **102**. The input device **204** may be any type, such as a keyboard, a touch screen input, or the like. For example, live operators may manually input group information in response to a request received from a user of a vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the wireless communications module **216**. As discussed above, the live operators may also be based in a service operator **103** communicatively coupled to the vehicle network server **102**, in which case the display device **210** and the input device **204** is optional components of the vehicle network server **102**.

The vehicle network server **102** operates in conjunction with the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** to provide the group interaction functions of the present invention. For example, the vehicle network server **102** may store group information (member list, member identification, members' cellular telephone numbers, etc.) in group data

module **220** of the memory device **208** for use by the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c**. The processor **206** in the vehicle network server **102** may also download such group information to the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the wireless communications module **216**. The vehicle network server **102** may receive a request to establish communication or run a selected application (e.g., a cellular telephone call or an interactive game) with respect to selected members in the group from the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** via the wireless communications module **216**. In response, the processor **206** in the vehicle network server **102** may run the selected application stored in the application module **226** of the memory device **208** with respect to the selected members via the wireless communications module **216** and the communications service provider **104** or establish wireless communications by placing a group call to the selected members.

FIG. 3A is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle navigation system **300a** according to a first embodiment of the present invention. The vehicle navigation system **300a** in FIG. 3A is used with the group interaction system **100a** in FIG. 1A. Referring to FIG. 3A, the vehicle navigation system **300a** includes a touch sensitive screen **301**, a GPS module **302**, an input device **304**, a speech recognition/synthesis module **305**, a processor **306**, a memory device **308**, a display device **310**, a wireless communications module **316**, and a bus **318**. The vehicle navigation system **300a** of the present invention is capable of performing the group establishment and interaction functions according to the present invention in addition to the functions of conventional vehicle navigation systems such as displaying the location of the vehicle in which the vehicle navigation system **300a** resides on a displayed map.

The wireless communications module **316** is preferably a cellular telephone interface (such as a GSM telephone interface). The wireless communications module **216** is capable of communicating with the various navigation systems **300** and the vehicle network server **102** using cellular communication via the communications service provider **104a**. The wireless communications module **316** communicates various information to/from the vehicle network server **102** via the communications service provider **104**, such as control data regarding selection of a group, selection of members in the group, various information regarding the members (e.g., identification of the members, cellular telephone numbers, etc.), selection of an application to run among the selected members, GPS information of the vehicle or other vehicles of the group, etc. These control data are transmitted by text messaging of the cellular communication. On the other hand, application data (such as voice data for cellular telephone calls) is transmitted and received using typical cellular communication.

The processor **306** controls the operation of the various components in the vehicle navigation system **300**, including the input device **304**, the speech recognition/synthesis module **305**, the memory device **308**, the display device **310**, the wireless communications module **316**, the GPS module **302**, and the touch sensitive screen **301**. To this end, the processor **306** executes instructions or programs stored in the memory device **308** to provide various functionalities of the vehicle navigation system **300**, such as establishing a group, requesting communication among selected members of the group to the vehicle network server **102**, running an application associated with selected members of the group, and the like.

The memory device **308** operates as a working memory for the processor **306** and also stores various information

11

used by the vehicle navigation system **300a**. The memory device **308** includes a group data module **320**, an O/S (operating system) module **322**, a group establishment module **324**, and an applications module **326**. The O/S module **322** stores the operating systems or boot-up sequences for the vehicle network server **102**. The group data module **320** stores all the group information such as group member list, identification of the group members, and the like. The group establishment module **324** stores instructions and programs for establishing a group of members according to the methods described in FIGS. 6A and 6B. The applications module **326** stores various applications for interaction with selected members of the group, such as a cellular telephone application, game application, and the like. The applications module **326** also stores a GPS application and associated map information for determining and displaying the location of the vehicle navigation systems **300a**. The memory device **308** is preferably a rewritable memory such as an SRAM, flash memory, or hard disk.

In a less distributed system according to another embodiment of the present invention, the memory device **208** may store less information such that the group information, the applications, and/or the application information for establishing wireless communication is stored in the vehicle network server **102** rather than in the vehicle navigation system **300a**.

The display device **310** displays information used for interaction with the user of the vehicle navigation system **300a**. For example, the display device **310** displays an interactive map as shown in FIG. 4 in order to indicate the location of the group members and facilitate selection of members and launching of associated applications with respect to the selected members. The display device **310** is preferably a liquid crystal display (LCD) although other types of display devices may be used.

The touch sensitive screen **301** is overlapped with the display device **310** in order to provide the user with capabilities of entering commands and data on an interactive display. The touch sensitive screen **301** is preferably a conventional resistive touch sensitive screen although other types of touch sensitive screens may be provided. The display device **310** and the touch sensitive screen **301** will be explained in more detail with reference to FIG. 4.

Alternative input and output means are also present in the vehicle navigation system **300a**. For example, the user may enter various data and commands to the vehicle navigation system **300a** using the input device **304** such as physical keys. The user may also enter data and commands for interaction with group members using the speech recognition/synthesis module **305**. Alternatively, the information shown on the display device **310** may be converted to a form of speech by the speech recognition/synthesis module **305** to convey the information therein to the user in audio form. The speech recognition/synthesis module **305** is a conventional speech recognition and synthesis module including a microphone (not shown), a speaker (not shown) and the software capabilities to recognize and synthesize speech. The operations of the conventional speech recognition/synthesis module **305** is well known to one skilled in the art and a detailed description of such operations is not necessary for an understanding of the present invention.

The GPS module **302** receives GPS information from GPS satellites via a GPS sensor (not shown) and determines the current location of the vehicle in which the vehicle navigation system **300a** resides by way of conventional

12

triangulation schemes. The determined location is shown on the display device **310** along with the locations of other vehicles of the group received from the other vehicle navigation systems **300** via the wireless communications module **316**. As stated above, information regarding the locations of other vehicles is transmitted by text messaging in cellular communication (such as GSM).

The vehicle navigation system **300a** operates in conjunction with the vehicle network server **102** and other vehicle navigation systems **300b**, **300c** in other vehicles **108a**, **110a** of the group to provide the group interaction functions of the present invention, as explained in FIGS. 5, 6, and 7A-7C. For example, the vehicle navigation system **300** may store group information (member list, member identification, members' cellular telephone number, etc.) in the memory device **308**. The vehicle navigation system **300** may also transmit a request to make a cellular telephone call or launch a selected application (such as an interactive game) with respect to selected members in the group to the vehicle network server **102** via the wireless communications module **216**. The vehicle navigation system **300** may also store and run such applications in the memory **308** of the vehicle navigation system **300** itself.

FIG. 3B is a block diagram illustrating a vehicle navigation system **300d** according to a second embodiment of the present invention. The vehicle navigation system **300d** in FIG. 3B is used with the group interaction system **100b** in FIG. 1B. The vehicle navigation system **300d** is same as the vehicle navigation system **300a** described in FIG. 3A except that it includes a peer-to-peer communication module **317** for communicating directly with other vehicle navigation systems **300d**. Control data such as selection of a group, various information regarding the members (e.g., identification of the members, cellular telephone numbers, etc.), and GPS information of the vehicle or other vehicles of the group, etc are transmitted via the peer-to-peer communication module **317**. The peer-to-peer communication module **317** is preferably a short-range radio communication interface, although other types of communication interfaces, such as IEEE 802.11b standard communication interfaces, may be used. On the other hand, selection of an application to run among the selected members, selection of members in the group for interaction, and actual application data (such as voice data for cellular telephone calls) is transmitted and received via the wireless communication module **316** by using typical cellular communication. In addition, the data and programs in the O/S module **322** and the group establishment module **324** and the operations of the processor **306** are modified from those in the vehicle navigation system **300a** to accommodate the functionalities of the peer-to-peer communication module **317**.

FIG. 4 is a graphical representation of the screen of the display device of the vehicle navigation system **300a** or **300d** according to one embodiment of the present invention. Map **406** is shown on a display device **310** overlapped with a touch sensitive screen **301**. Referring to FIG. 4, the map **406** is displayed indicating the location and names of various streets. The locations of three cars (car 1, car 2, and car 3) of a given group are also displayed on the map **406**, although it should be clear to one skilled in the art that any number of cars may be shown on the map **406** depending upon the number of members in the group. Assuming that the display device **310** is one in the vehicle navigation system **300a** or **300d** of car 1, the location of car 1 is determined by the GPS module **302** and displayed on the map **406**. The locations of other vehicles (car 2 and car 3) of the group are received via the wireless communications

13

module **316** from the vehicle navigation systems **300b**, **300c** in cars **2** and **3** or via the peer-to-peer communications module **317** from the vehicle navigation systems **300e**, **300f** in cars **2** and **3** and are likewise displayed on the map **406**. The user of the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** may select a certain car by touching the icon (indication) corresponding to the car in order to launch or run an application with respect to such selected car. For example, the user may touch the indication of car **2** on the map **406** to select car **2** and launch an application (such as making a cellular telephone call) with respect to car **2**. The display device **310** is overlapped with a touch sensitive screen **301**, so the touch sensitive screen **301** may determine which car is selected by detecting the location of the user's touch.

The list of applications **404** shows various applications, such as the cellular telephone application, an interactive game application, and two other applications available to the vehicle navigation system **300** with respect to the selected members in the group. The user may select a desired application by touching the part of the screen that indicates the desired application in the list of applications **404**.

The input icons **402** on the touch sensitive screen **301** are used to enter various data and commands to the vehicle navigation system **300**. The input icons **402** preferably include various icons corresponding to commands and data for navigating through a menu and selecting a particular item on the menu, so that a user may input various data and commands for establishing an interactive group or launching an application with respect to selected members.

In actual use, the user of the vehicle navigation system **300** selects one or more cars in the group with which the user wishes to interact by touching the icons corresponding to the desired cars on the map **406**, and selects an application to be launched with respect to the members in the group by touching the icon corresponding to the desired application in the list of applications **404**. For example, when the user in car **1** wishes to place a cellular telephone call with car **2**, the user selects car **2** by touching the indication of car **2** on the map **406**, and selects the cellular telephone application by touching the corresponding icon of the cellular telephone application among the list of applications **404**. In response, the vehicle navigation system **300** launches the selected application (cellular telephone application) with respect to car **2** according to the method described below with reference to FIGS. **7A** and **7B**.

The graphical representation of the display device **310** illustrated in FIG. **4** is a mere example of a user interface for the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d**. It should be obvious to one skilled in the art that any type or form of user interface may be used in the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300d** to interact with the users.

FIG. **5** is a flowchart illustrating a method of interacting with selected members within an enabled group using the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** according to one embodiment of the present invention. As the process begins **502**, the user of the vehicle navigation system **300** establishes **504** a group of members (cars or vehicle navigation systems) with which the user wishes to interact. The information used in establishing the group of members may include the member's identification (e.g., a cellular telephone number corresponding to the member or vehicle identification number corresponding to the vehicle) and the applications available to each group member. Step **504** is illustrated in more detail below with reference to FIGS. **6A** and **6B**.

Once the group is established, the vehicle navigation system **300** receives **506** information regarding the location

14

of each member in the group from each vehicle navigation system **300** corresponding to the members via the wireless communications module **316**. Such locations are displayed **508** on the display device **310** as icons on the map **406** and repetitively updated until a user input is received **509**.

The user selects one or more of the members by touching the icons corresponding to the desired members on the map **406**, and the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** receives **510** such selection of the members. Then, the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** receives **511** a selection of an application from the user. For example, the vehicle navigation system **300** may receive a selection to make a cellular telephone call to the selected members. In response, the vehicle navigation system **300** launches **512** the selected application with respect to the selected members within the group. For example, if the selected application is a cellular telephone call, the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** makes a cellular telephone call or requests the vehicle network server **102** to make a cellular telephone call to the selected member(s). If selected application is an interactive game, the vehicle navigation system **300a**, **300d** launches the interactive game application or requests the vehicle network server **102** to launch the interactive game application among the selected member(s). Step **512** is illustrated in more detail with reference to FIGS. **7A** and **7B**. The process then returns to step **506** for further real-time tracking of the members' locations and receipt of selection of members and applications.

FIG. **6A** is a flowchart illustrating the step **504a** of establishing a group of members according to a first embodiment of the present invention. The step **504a** of FIG. **6A** establishes the group of members by cooperation of the vehicle navigation system **300a** and the vehicle network server **102** and is used with the group interaction system **100a** described in FIG. **1A**.

Referring to FIG. **6A**, as the process begins **502**, the vehicle navigation system **300a** receives **604** selection of the members to be included in the group. Such selection of members may be input by using the touch sensitive screen **301** or the input device **302**. The vehicle navigation system **300a** transmits **606** such selection of group members to the vehicle network server **102**. The vehicle network server **102** establishes **608** communications with the selected group members and requests **610** each selected member for permission to add the member to the group. Then, the vehicle network server **102** transmits **612** the results of the requests **610** back to the vehicle navigation system **300a**. Thereafter, the vehicle network server **300a** adds **614** the members giving permission to the enabled group. This group information may be shared with other members of the group. To this end, the vehicle navigation system **300a** transmits **616** the established group information to the vehicle navigation system **102**, and the vehicle navigation system **102** in turn transmits **618** such established group information to the members of the group, and the process continues with step **506**.

FIG. **6B** is a flowchart illustrating step **504b** of establishing a group of members according to a second embodiment of the present invention. The step **504b** of FIG. **6B** establishes the group of members in the vehicle network server **102** using information downloaded from an external source and downloads the group information to the vehicle navigation systems **300a**.

Referring to FIG. **6B**, as the process begins **502**, the vehicle network server **102** receives **632** a list of members from an external source. For example, the vehicle network

15

server **102** may download the list of members of the group from an Internet web server via its data communication module **212**. As another example, a live operator may manually input the list of members of the group by using the input keys **204**. The vehicle network server **102** establishes **634** the group of members for interaction by using the received list of members. Then, the vehicle network server **102** downloads **636** the established group information to the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300b**, **300c** in the group, and the process continues with step **506**.

Although two embodiments of establishing a group has been described above with reference to FIGS. **6A** and **6B**, the group may also be established simply by manually inputting the group information in the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300d** using the touch sensitive screen **301** or the input devices **304**. In addition, the group may also be simply selected in the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300d** from a predetermined set of group lists which are stored in the vehicle navigation systems **300a**, **300d** based upon previous use or setting by its users.

FIG. **7A** is a flowchart illustrating the step **512a** of running the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system **102** and the selected members according to one embodiment of the present invention. Step **512a** illustrated in FIG. **7A** runs the selected application stored in a vehicle network server **102** by cooperation of the vehicle navigation system **300a** and the vehicle network server **102**.

Referring to FIG. **7A**, as the process continues **511**, the vehicle navigation system **300a** establishes **704** communications with the vehicle network server **102** and transmits **706** the selected member and selected application information to the vehicle network server **102**. For example, the vehicle navigation system **300** transmits to the vehicle network server **102** a request to make a cellular telephone conference call to Car **2** and Car **3** in the group. The vehicle network server launches **708** the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system **300a** transmitting such information and to the selected members, and the process continues **810**. For example, the vehicle network server **102** makes a cellular telephone call between the vehicle network server **300a** transmitting such information and all the selected members by running a cellular telephone application stored in the applications module **226** of the memory device **208**.

FIG. **7B** is a flowchart illustrating a step **512b** of launching the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system and the selected members according to another embodiment of the present invention. Step **512b** illustrated in FIG. **7B** launches the selected application stored in the vehicle navigation system **300d** and thus does not involve communication with the vehicle network server **102**. As such, step **512b** is used by the vehicle navigation system **300d** when it is used in the group interaction system **100b** capable of peer-to-peer communication. That is, step **512b** may be used when the vehicle navigation system **300d** communicates with other members directly via short-range radio communication or the like, without the use of the vehicle network server **102**.

Referring to FIG. **7B**, as the process continues **511**, the vehicle navigation system **300d** establishes **722** communications with the selected members directly via the wireless communications module **316** through the communications service provider **104**. Then, the vehicle navigation system **300** launches **724** the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system **300d** and the selected members by running the selected application stored therein, and the

16

process continues with step **506**. For example, the vehicle navigation system **300d** may place a cellular telephone call to the selected members through the communications service provider **104**.

FIG. **7C** is a flowchart illustrating the step **512c** of running the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system and the selected members according to still another embodiment of the present invention. Step **512c** illustrated in FIG. **7C** runs a selected application stored in a vehicle network server **102** by cooperation of the vehicle navigation system **300a** and the vehicle network server **102**. The application run in FIG. **7C** is one that requires constant interaction and communication of control signals among the selected members of the group, such as an interactive game.

Referring to FIG. **7C**, as the process continues **511**, the vehicle navigation system **300a** establishes **744** communications with the vehicle network server **102** and transmits **746** the selected member and selected application information to the vehicle network server **102**. For example, the vehicle navigation system **300** transmits to the vehicle network server **102** a request to run an interactive game with respect to Car **2** and Car **3** in the group. The vehicle network server launches **748** the selected application with respect to the vehicle navigation system **300a** transmitting such information and to the selected members. For example, the vehicle network server **102** launches the interactive game application with respect to the vehicle network server **300a** transmitting such information and all the selected members (cars **2** and **3**). The interactive game application is stored in the applications module **226** of the memory device **208**. Thereafter, the vehicle network server receives **750** other controls used in the launched application (e.g., control signals for interactive game application) from the selected members (cars **2** and **3**). The vehicle navigation system **300a** also transmits **752** control signals used in the interactive application to the vehicle navigation system **102** so that the vehicle navigation system can run the interactive application based upon the control signals from the vehicle navigation systems **300a** and other selected members. Steps **750** and **752** are repeated until a command to terminate the application is received **752** by the vehicle navigation system **300a**. Then, the process continues with step **506**.

Although the present invention has been described above with respect to several embodiments, various modifications can be made within the scope of the present invention. The type of communication used among the vehicle navigation systems or between the vehicle navigation system and the vehicle network server is not limited to those described above, and any type of wireless communication may be used according to the present invention. The information required for establishing a group of members may vary depending upon the type of applications to run among the selected members and is not limited to the type of information described above. It should be obvious that the present inventions may be used with any numbers of a group. The type of applications that is run among the selected members is not limited to cellular telephone obvious to one skilled in the art that any type of application may be used with respect to selected members of the group. Accordingly, the disclosure of the present invention is intended to be illustrative, but not limiting, of the scope of the invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A vehicle navigation system capable of interacting with a plurality of other vehicle navigation systems of a group, the vehicle navigation system comprising:

a memory device including a group data module, a group establishment module, and an applications module, the

17

group data module storing identification information identifying members of the group of the vehicle navigation system and said other vehicle navigation systems, the group establishment module storing a group establishment application configured to be executed in the vehicle navigation system for establishing the group, and the applications module storing a plurality of group interaction applications for interaction with selected ones of the members of the group, a selected one of said group interaction applications being executed among said selected ones of the members of the group; and

a processor coupled to the memory device for executing the group establishment application and said selected one of the group interaction applications.

2. The vehicle navigation system of claim 1, wherein the applications module further stores a global position system application for determining locations of the members of the group.

3. A vehicle navigation system in a first vehicle and capable of interacting with a plurality of other vehicle navigation systems of a group, the group comprised of the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle and the other vehicle navigation systems in a plurality of second vehicles, the vehicle navigation system comprising:

a global positioning system (GPS) module receiving a GPS signal and determining a location of the first vehicle based upon the GPS signal;

a wireless communications module for communicating with the other vehicle navigation systems of the group and receiving location information corresponding to the second vehicles from the other vehicle navigation systems of the group;

a display device coupled to the GPS module and the wireless communications module and displaying the location of the first vehicle and the second vehicles on a map and a list of a plurality of group interaction applications;

a touch sensitive screen coupled to the display device and capable of receiving input commands corresponding to a selection of one or more of the second vehicles on the map and a selection of one of the group interaction applications;

a processor coupled to the touch sensitive screen for executing the selected one of the group interaction applications with respect to the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle and the other vehicle navigation systems in the selected ones of the second vehicles and a group establishment application for establishing the group; and

a memory device storing the group interaction applications, the group establishment application, and identification information identifying the other vehicle navigation systems in the second vehicles of the group.

4. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the identification information is a cellular telephone number corresponding to each of the other vehicle navigation systems in the second vehicles or a vehicle identification number corresponding to each of the second vehicles.

5. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle is communicatively coupled to the other vehicle navigation systems in the second vehicles via the wireless communication module without a vehicle network server.

6. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the vehicle navigation system receives the identification infor-

18

mation corresponding to the other vehicle navigation systems in the second vehicles by receiving input to the vehicle navigation system on the touch sensitive screen.

7. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the wireless communications module is a cellular telephone interface.

8. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the selected one of the group interaction applications is a cellular telephone application and the processor enables establishment of a cellular telephone call between the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle and the other vehicle navigation systems in the selected second vehicles.

9. The vehicle navigation system of claim 3, wherein the locations of the first vehicle and the second vehicles are indicated on the display device as icons on the map and one or more of the second vehicles are selected for interaction by touching the corresponding icons as the input commands to the touch sensitive screen.

10. In a first vehicle navigation system, a method of interacting with a plurality of second vehicle navigation systems, the method comprising:

establishing a group including the first vehicle navigation system and the second vehicle navigation systems by executing a group establishment application in the first vehicle navigation system;

receiving information regarding the locations of the first vehicle navigation system and the second vehicle navigation systems;

displaying the locations of the first and the second vehicle navigation systems;

displaying a plurality of group interaction applications; receiving selection of one or more of the second vehicle navigation systems;

receiving selection of one of the group interaction applications; and

executing said selected one of the group interaction applications with respect to the first vehicle navigation system and said selected ones of the second vehicle navigation systems.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein establishing a group comprises;

receiving identification information corresponding to the first vehicle navigation system and the plurality of second vehicle navigation systems;

establishing communication with the plurality of second vehicle navigation systems based upon the identification information and requesting the plurality of second vehicle navigation systems for permission to be added to the group; and

adding to the group the second vehicle navigation systems giving permission.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the identification information is a cellular telephone number corresponding to each of the first and second vehicle navigation systems.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein establishing a group comprises executing the group establishment application in the first vehicle navigation system to receive identification information corresponding to the first vehicle navigation system and the second vehicle navigation systems from a vehicle network server communicatively coupled to the first vehicle navigation system.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein said selected one of the group interaction applications is a cellular telephone application and executing said selected one of the group interaction applications comprises establishing a cellular

19

telephone call between the first vehicle navigation system and said selected ones of the second vehicle navigation systems.

15. A vehicle navigation system in a first vehicle and capable of interacting with a plurality of other vehicle navigation systems of a group, the group comprised of the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle and the other vehicle navigation systems in second vehicles, the vehicle navigation system comprising:

global positioning system (GPS) means for receiving a GPS signal and determining a location of the first vehicle based upon the GPS signal;

communication means for communicating with the other vehicle navigation systems of the group and receiving location information corresponding to the second vehicles from the other vehicle navigation systems of the group;

output means coupled to the GPS means and the communications means for outputting the location of the

20

first vehicle and the second vehicles on a map and a list of a plurality of group interaction applications;

input means coupled to the output means for receiving input commands corresponding to a selection of one or more of the second vehicles on the map and a selection of one of the group interaction applications;

processor means coupled to the input means for executing the selected one of the group interaction applications with respect to the vehicle navigation system in the first vehicle and the other vehicle navigation systems in the selected ones of the second vehicles and a group establishment application for establishing the group; and

memory means for storing the group interaction applications, the group establishment application, and identification information identifying the other vehicle navigation systems in the second vehicles of the group.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 6,868,333 B2
DATED : March 15, 2005
INVENTOR(S) : Roger D. Melen

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Title page,

Item [57], **ABSTRACT**,

Line 9, please replace "to interact" with -- are selected for interaction --

Line 14, please insert the word -- vehicle -- between "other" and "navigation".

Signed and Sealed this

Fourteenth Day of June, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light gray dotted background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Jon W. Dudas".

JON W. DUDAS

Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office